

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend line 6 on page 1 as follows:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONCROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Please insert the following two paragraphs before line 1 on page 4:

Fig. 1A illustrates a schematic diagram of a representative example system in a variation of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 1B illustrates a schematic diagram of a representative example system in a third embodiment of the present invention.

Please insert the following four paragraphs before line 5 on page 4:

Fig. 2A shows an embodiment of the digital signer side apparatus 1.

Fig. 2B shows an embodiment of the purchaser side apparatus 3.

Fig. 2C shows an embodiment of the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5.

Fig. 2D shows an embodiment of the timestamp issuing apparatus 8.

Please amend the three paragraphs beginning on line 25 on page 7 as follows:

The Referring to Fig. 2A, the external storage device 13 in each digital signer side apparatus 1 stores a signature-attached message creating program 131 for causing the IC card 22 to generate a digital signature for a message and attaching the generated digital signature to the message before distributing the message as a digital-signature-attached message, and a verification requesting program 132 for causing the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 to verify a digital-signature-attached message created by the digital signer side apparatus 1 and providing the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 with information necessary for the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 to verify the digital-signature-attached message, according to the instructions of the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5. These programs are loaded into the RAM 12 so that the CPU 11 executes them as

processes such as a signature-attached message creation processing section 111 and a verification request processing section 112.

~~The~~ Referring to Fig. 2B, the external storage device 13 in each purchaser side apparatus 3 stores a signature-attached message acquiring program 331 for acquiring a digital-signature-attached message from a digital signer side apparatus 1, and a verification requesting program 332 for causing the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 to verify the acquired digital-signature-attached message. These programs are loaded into the RAM 12 so that the CPU 11 executes them as processes such as a signature-attached message acquisition processing section 311 and a verification request processing section 312.

~~The~~ Referring to Fig. 2C, the external storage device 13 in the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 stores a signature verifying program 531 for verifying a digital-signature-attached message according to the instructions of a digital signer side apparatus 1 or a purchaser side apparatus. This program is loaded into the RAM 12 so that the CPU 11 executes it as a process called a signature verification processing section 511.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 24 on page 16 as follows:

~~Further~~ Referring to Fig. 1A, instead of setting a signature log table in the EEPROM 223, a signature log management apparatus 9 may be newly added to the configuration shown Fig. 1 to manage the signature log table for each digital signer side apparatus 1. With this arrangement, each digital signer side apparatus 1 may register a signature log with the signature log table corresponding to each digital signer side apparatus 1 itself each time a digital signature is newly generated, or as is the case with registration with the signature log table in the external storage device 13, a plurality of signature logs may be registered together at once with a signature log table which is set in the signature log management apparatus 9 and corresponds to each digital signer side apparatus 1.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on line 11 on page 17 as follows:

It should be noted that the signature log management apparatus 9 may be created on the same computer as that on which the digital signature verifier side apparatus 5 resides (as shown in Fig. 1A, for example), or the signature log management apparatus 9 may be created on both the same and a different computers so that signature logs may be initially managed by the signature log management apparatus on the same computer and when the number of signature logs has reached a

predetermined value, they may be registered together at once with the signature log management apparatus on the different computer.

Please amend the two paragraphs beginning on line 20 on page 28 as follows:

This system is configured so that a timestamp issuing apparatus 8, which issues a timestamp for a digital signature sent from each digital signer side apparatus 1, is added to a system according to the first embodiment shown in Fig. 1. See for example Fig. 1B.

The schematic configuration of the timestamp issuing apparatus 8 is the same as that shown in Fig. 2. Fig. 2D shows an embodiment of the timestamp issuing apparatus based on the schematic configuration of Fig. 2.